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ABSTRACT

A study explored whether the pictorial coverage of African-Americans in three national magazines (Life, Newsweek, and Time) has increased over time, whether the content categories of those pictures has changed, and whether the picture percentage for African-Americans has approached their percentage of the population (11%). Content analysis of pictures was performed at five-year intervals for the years 1937 to 1988, checking for African-American presence in covers, and in pictures related to everyday life, prominent persons, social commentary, advertisements, entertainment, sports, and crime. Findings included: (1) the African-American percentage has increased from an average low for all three magazines of 1.1% in 1942 to an average high of 8.8% in 1988; and (2) the increase is due largely to dramatic increases in everyday life, prominent person, and advertisement subject categories. This trend indicates the way the American media have evolved--from the stereotypical coverage of 50 years ago, towards more sensitivity on the part of editors to showing African-Americans as equal members of society, a trend which should be encouraged. (Five tables of data, 8 figures, and 25 notes are included.) (SR)

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN PICTURE COVERAGE IN LIFE, NEWSWEEK AND TIME, 1937-1988

By

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A content analysis of the pictorial treatment of African-Americans for three magazines was performed. Over the years studied, the African-American percentage has increased from an average low for all three magazines of 1.1 percent in 1942 to an average high of 8.8 percent in 1988.

The increase in African-American coverage is due largely because of dramatic increases in everyday life, prominent person and advertisement subject categories. An emphasis on those subjects is an indication that African-Americans received recent attention not because of protests, entertainment or sports figures, but because of a sensitivity on the part of editors to show African-Americans as equal members of society. Such a trend reflects the way the American media have evolved from the stereotypical coverage of 50 years ago. Publishers, editors, reporters and photographers should be encouraged to continue that positive trend.

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN PICTURE COVERAGE IN LIFE, NEWSWEEK AND TIME, 1937-1988

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There has generally been a move toward a more fair and objective picture of African-Americans in newspaper and magazine photographs./1 Gone are the stereotypes published in the late 1930s when Life magazine, "overwhelmingly presented Negroes as either musical, primitive, amusing, or religious, or as violent and criminal; occupationally, they were pictured as either servants, athletes, or entertainers, or as unemployed."/2

Today's media generally concentrate more on prominent African-Americans and racial issues without relying on stereotypes as was true in the past. Jesse Jackson runs for president, William White becomes baseball's National League president, Ron Brown heads the Democratic National Committee, and Barbara Harris is consecrated as the first woman bishop of the Episcopal Church are examples of positive news stories that involve African-Americans.

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1. Throughout this study, the term "African-American" will be used as a replacement for the word "black." As noted recently by a group of African-Americans, including Jesse Jackson, the term is preferred because it denotes the origin of a people rather than their color. Columnists as diverse as Clarence Page and Ann Landers have advocated the use of the term.

2. Pettigrew, T. F. (1965, Fall). Complexity and Change in American Racial Patterns: A Social Psychological View. Daedalus, 998.

Yet, as one national columnist has written, "racial justice remains for blacks, a distant dream." Affirmative action programs have recently been limited by the Supreme Court. The Urban League in its study, "The State of Black America 1989," reported the high poverty rate of African-Americans under the Reagan Administration. A recent survey found that "blacks are less likely to seek medical care than whites." Another government study found that "black babies are still almost twice as likely to die as whites." A media watchdog group reported that guests of a nationally televised news-interview program are generally white, conservative males./3 Despite advances in the media's coverage of African-Americans, social and economic unity still lag.

What progress there is in the media's coverage of African-Americans can be traced from the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s and the Kerner Commission's report on civil disorders released in 1968. The report, an outgrowth of African-American protests and riots, criticized the media for ignoring the everyday life situations of African-Americans. "By failing to portray the Negro as a matter of routine and in the context of the total society," the report stated, "the news media have, we believe, contributed to the black-white schism in this country."/4

A survey of magazine executives reported in the Columbia Journalism Review found that the same criticisms leveled against newspapers and television by the Kerner Commission could be said about magazines. One magazine editor

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3. Raspberry, W. (1989, January). Blacks dare to hope that Bush will make racial justice a reality. The Orlando Sentinel. Research finds inequities for blacks in medical care and drug tests. (1989, January). The Orlando Sentinel. U.S. blacks miss out on increased life span. (1989, March). The Orlando Sentinel. Nightline Criticized. (1989, February). The Orlando Sentinel.

4. Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. (1968). New York: Bantam, 383.

characterized the media's coverage as a "search for villains and heroes, and an incorrect emphasis on those Negro leaders who behave most theatrically. Violence and violent words are disproportionately highlighted, while real feelings are rarely portrayed."/5

In 1970, Ebony magazine published an advertisement with the headline, "Why Johnny Can't Read Your Ads." The Ebony ad criticized the media's use of blond, all-American models in pictures selling everything from cigarettes to automobiles and in the "stories that surround those ads." "Johnny, you see, has trouble identifying with ... all-American types," the ad stated. "They may be all-American in your neighborhood, but not in Johnny's. So Johnny doesn't get past the pictures to the words. He knows they're not meant for him."/6

The Kerner Commission's report and its subsequent coverage, sparked great interest among academic scholars to study the media's coverage of the races. Short and long-term studies related to advertising and news editorial pictures and stories within newspapers, magazines and on television were published. A common theme that developed among the studies was: Although fair and unbiased African-American coverage was on the rise, the number of African-Americans in advertisements or in news photographs was low compared with the number of white Americans.

Some researchers, to their credit, recognized the need to study African-American media coverage before the Kerner Commission's report. In 1963, Dave Berkman looked at advertisements in four issues in Ebony and Life magazines in

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5. Klein, W. (1968, Fall). News media and race relations: a self-portrait. Columbia Journalism Review, 43.

6. Why Johnny Can't Read Your Ads. (1970, March). The New York Times, 90.

1960. Berkman found that Ebony was more likely than Life to print advertisements selling "alcoholic beverages (including beer), patent medicines, men's apparel and accessories, 'money-making opportunities,' and Negro cosmetics and hair products." The difference in appeals, Berkman wrote, reflects "the dichotomy which exists between Negro middle-class aspirations and status reality."/7

Verdelle Lambert in 1964 analyzed pictures and text in 52 issues from 1959-60 and 1963-64 of Look magazine "dealing with the American Negro." Lambert found an increase in non-racial references to African-Americans and concluded that "Look is more likely to treat the Negro not as a Negro but as a member of society."/8

Advertising photographs in selected issues of newspapers and magazines were studied in 1964 by William Boyenton. Of the 7,400 total pages in four metropolitan newspapers, 12 advertisements were found to contain pictures of African-American models. The 2,500 pages in three magazines yielded four ads with African-Americans. Boyenton concluded that the lack of progress "need not be construed as segregationist or anti-Negro. It would be nearer to the point to attribute the slow pace to the well-worn habit of seeking business where it is known to be."/9

In the following year, Harold Kassarjian, critical of the "limited time span and the informal or unsystematic content analysis" of past studies,

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7. Berkman, D. (1963, Winter). Advertising in "Ebony" and "Life": Negro Aspirations vs. Reality. Journalism Quarterly, 53-64.

8. Lambert, V. (1964, Autumn). Negro Exposure in Look's Editorial Content. Journalism Quarterly, 657-659.

9. Boyenton, W. H. (1965, Spring). The Negro Turns to Advertising. Journalism Quarterly, 227-235.

looked at African-Americans in advertisements for the years, 1946, 1956 and 1965. The purpose of the study was to look at the frequency, roles and changes in the roles of African-Americans in ads. Twelve magazines with circulations each of over 250,000 were selected. In total, 546 ads were isolated from 150,000 magazine pages. Kassarjian found that the frequency of using African-Americans in ads remained low and about the same for the three years. "The Negro's occupational status, however, has risen significantly, but he is still seldom found in conventional middle-class settings."/10

In 1970, the Journal of Advertising Research published a "Special Issue: Research on Negroes." Writers reported their findings in articles titled, "The Negro Market," "Integrated Advertising - White Backlash?," "Three Seasons of Black's on Television," "How Negro Models Affect Company Image," "White Responses to Integrated Advertising," and "Social Effects of Integrated Advertising." Among the conclusions in the studies were that "ads with all-Negro or all-white principals may be more effective than integrated ads" and the occupational roles of African-Americans have shifted "from cooks, maids, and butlers, etc., to businessmen, students, and consumers."/11

In 1971, Ronald Geizer looked at the advertising content in Ebony magazine in 1960 and 1969. Geizer found that although "the proportion of black advertisements has not changed drastically from 1960 to 1969" there has been an increase number of racially mixed ads. Such a finding, it was concluded,

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10. Kassarjian, H. H. (1969, February). The Negro and American Advertising, 1946-1965. Journal of Marketing Research, 29-39.

11. Various Authors. (1970, April). Special Issue: Research on Negroes. Journal of Advertising Research.

reflected the perceived philosophy of Ebony as an advocate for integration and middle class values./12

Guido Stempel looked at the first 10 issues of five U.S. magazines in 1960 and 1970. News and advertising pictures were analyzed for white and African-American content. Stempel found that the percentages of African-Americans in news pictures increased from 1960 to 1970, that whites are used more often in advertisements than for news pictures, and the differences are insignificant between the five magazines studied./13

In 1982, Mary Alice Sentman completed one of the most long-term and thorough content analysis studies to date. Sentman looked at African-American coverage in Life magazine from 1937 to 1972 using five-year increments. Sentman found that although there was a sharp increase in the total percentage of African-Americans in the last two years of her study, "Coverage of black Americans constituted a minute portion of Life's content." Everyday life activities of African-Americans, one of the editor's goal, were "markedly absent" from the pages of the magazine. Such a finding contradicted Life's mission stated by Henry Luce in 1936, "To see life; to see the world; to eyewitness great events; to watch the faces of the poor and the gestures of the proud ... to see and be instructed." Sentman concluded that "Life failed to provide its mass audience with an opportunity for exposure to the everyday life of black America."/14

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12. Geizer, R. (1971, Spring). Advertising in Ebony: 1960 and 1969. Journalism Quarterly, 131-134.

13. Stempel, G. H. (1971, Summer). Visibility of Blacks in News and News-Picture Magazines. Journalism Quarterly, 337-339.

14. Sentman, M. A. (1983, Autumn). Black and White: Disparity in Coverage by Life Magazine from 1937 to 1972. Journalism Quarterly, 501-508.

Based on the premise that "the way the media portray black Americans and report on relations between the races strongly influences the way the public perceives these aspects of American life" and the assumption that "it can be argued that for many - perhaps most - American blacks not much has changed since 1968, when the Kerner report sketched a stark picture of the American black's position at the bottom of society's socioeconomic ladder," Carolyn Martindale, in her 1986 book, The White Press and Black America, reported the results of a content analysis of newspaper story, column, letter and picture coverage of African-Americans. A total of 245 issues were analyzed for three time periods, 1950-53, 1963-68 and 1972-80 in four newspapers. A slight increase in coverage for African-Americans for the years studied was found. Martindale concluded that the increase may be a result of "an increased awareness of blacks, and, perhaps, a desire to cover them more extensively and realistically than ... in the past." The increase "may also have resulted partly from an increased visibility and participation of black citizens in the everyday life of American society."/15

If a trend toward covering the everyday life events of African-Americans is in effect, a long-term content analysis of media coverage should reveal an upward trend on the cover and for the content categories of everyday life, prominent persons, social commentary, and advertisements. The content categories of entertainment, sports and crime should decline as stereotypical coverage is reduced.

Furthermore, a readership study revealed that the percentage of African-Americans who read Life, Newsweek and Time is 14.9, 10.7 and 9.3

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15. Martindale, C. (1986). The White Press and Black America. New York: Greenwood Press, 1-4, 82.

respectively./16 The 1980 census reported that African-Americans comprise 11 percent of the U.S. population./17 Since readership figures approximately coincide with the population figure, it is reasonable to assume that the percentage of African-Americans pictured within each magazine should be at least 11 percent. As John Wheatley wrote in his criticism of Kassarjian's study, "if race were not a criterion for the selection of a model one would expect random selection to result in approximately 11% of all advertisements containing people having blacks in them."/18 The same logic should hold true for news editorial pictures.

Kassarjian and Sentman reported low total percentages for pictures of African-Americans because they based their figures on the total number of pages published, not on the number of pictures with human figures. Pages without photographs and pictures without human figures should not be included in the analysis.

A new study is necessary for several reasons. The African-American picture content in Life, Newsweek and Time was last compared by Stempel for the year, 1970. Life magazine's coverage of African-Americans was last studied by Sentman for the years, 1937-1972. More recent data should be obtained and analyzed. Secondly, the three magazines have not been compared for as many issues over as many years as in the present study. A complete picture of magazine picture use will thus be obtained. Lastly, although this study replicates the method used by Sentman to classify photographs, total

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16. Simmons Market Research Bureau, Inc. (1984). 1984 Study of Media & Markets, 28-29.

17. Staff. (1983, January). Newsweek, 22.

18. Wheatley, J. J. (1971, August). The Use of Black Models in Advertising. Journal of Marketing Research, 391.

percentages based on the number of human figure pages is a method unique to this study. If such a method proves more accurate, it is hoped that this technique will be used by future researchers when calculating picture use percentages.

Based on the results from previous research, five hypotheses can be postulated about the African-American pictorial coverage within the pages of three nationally published magazines, Life, Newsweek and Time:

1. African-American coverage has increased over time,

2. The content categories of everyday life, prominent persons, social commentary, and advertisements will increase over time,

3. The content categories of entertainment, sports and crime will decrease over time,

4. The African-American pictorial coverage will be similar for all three magazines, and

5. The African-American picture percentage will approach the 11 percent circulation and population figure for each magazine over time.

METHODOLOGY

A content analysis of the pictorial treatment of African-Americans for all issues for the years, 1937, 1942, 1947, 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1978, 1983 and 1988 for Life, Newsweek and Time magazines was performed. The three magazines were selected because of their national prominence, large circulations, and blend of news and feature subject stories.

It was concluded from a preliminary study that a sample of any fewer issues would not result in a fair representation of each magazine's coverage. Pictures of African-Americans are scattered among many issues of each magazine throughout the year. Clustering within an issue occurs because of significant news events or special issues devoted to African-Americans. If a random or purposeful sample of issues within a year was taken, the risk of missing

important instances of African-American coverage would be high. A fair representation of the magazine's coverage, therefore, could not be stated.

Picture content was studied because of the photograph's power to immediately impact a reader's perceptions. Woodburn has reported that surveys show "that readership of pictures is high in comparison to other elements of a newspaper."/19 Miller wrote that "photos are among the first news items to catch the reader's eye, and they often help to establish the context or frame of reference in which the reader interprets an accompanying story."/20 Blackwood made the point that "sometimes the photos are the only representations of world events to which some people are exposed. These factors make the photos in newspapers potentially important conveyors of information and shapers of attitudes."/21 If African-Americans have been slighted, pictures will clearly show that fact. As Stempel noted, pictures show "the most clearcut evidence of visibility or lack of it."/22

The years studied reflect the pre- and post-civil rights era, the Kerner Commission's influence on media coverage, and the present situation. Because Life quit publishing in 1972, but resumed in 1978 as a monthly, Newsweek and Time, for this analysis, coincided with Life's years of publication.

The unit of analysis for the study was the page. If African-American picture coverage comprised half a page, the coverage was tabulated as .5. If

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19. Woodburn, B. W. (1947, Autumn). Reader Interest in Newspaper Pictures. Journalism Quarterly, 197.

20. Miller, S. H. (1975, Spring). The Content of News Photos: Women's and Men's Roles. Journalism Quarterly, 72.

21. Blackwood, R. E. (1983, Winter). The Content of News Photos: Roles Portrayed by Men and Women. Journalism Quarterly, 711.

22. Stempel, 338-339.

two pages were devoted to pictures of African-Americans, the coverage was tabulated at 2.

With Sentman's study as a model, the subject categories were covers, everyday life, prominent persons, social commentary, advertisements, entertainment, sports and crime.

1. Covers. Coverage of any African-American on the cover.

2. Everyday Life. Coverage of any African-American engaged in an everyday life activity.

3. Prominent Person. Any coverage of widely known African-Americans either pictured alone or within groups.

4. Social Commentary. Coverage of issues specifically related to the place of African-Americans in American society.

5. Advertisements. Any picture within an advertising context of African-Americans.

6. Entertainment. Coverage of entertainers, fashion models and the arts.

7. Sports. Coverage of any athlete or sporting event.

8. Crime. Coverage of the accused and victims within a crime-related picture.

To avoid any coder reliability problems, all of the data was collected by one of the researchers.

The total number of pictures with human figures was calculated from 99 issues - the first issue of January, the last issue of June, and the last issue of December - of each year studied for each magazine. Some of Sentman's data was used for Life magazine's analysis.

Coverage of foreign persons of African descent was not included.

Since Life magazine published three issues in 1978, the 12 issues for 1979 were included in the 1978 analysis.

FINDINGS

Out of the 160,802 total pages studied for all three magazines, 34,237.9 pages were devoted to pictures of human figures. Out of the human figure total, 1,149.1 pages were pictures of African-Americans, or 3.36 percent for all three magazines for the years studied. Tables I-III show the percentages for each magazine for the years studied. Figure I graphically portrays the African-American picture percentage totals in Tables I-III.

Using the human figure page count, overall African-American picture percentages are higher than reported in previous studies that used the total page count method. All three magazines show general improvement in African-American coverage.

All three magazines are consistently low in their African-American picture use from 1937 until 1962. The years 1967, 1972 and 1988 generally show increases in coverage for all three magazines. Newsweek magazine in 1988 shows a sharp increase in African-American coverage compared with the other two magazines. Table IV and Figures II-VIII help explain the causes for the differences.

From 1952 until 1962, Life published more African-American pictures than the other two magazines. The difference is because Life magazine printed more entertainment and social commentary subjects.

All three magazines show a marked rise in African-American use in 1967 and 1972. This rise can be traced to the subject categories of social commentary, crime, sports and entertainment (in 1972).

From 1972 to 1978 there is an increase in coverage in Time and a sharp decrease in the other two magazines. Time had a large advertising picture increase to account for the difference.

From 1978 to 1988 there is a general increase in coverage in Life and Time. Newsweek's sharp increase to 13 percent for 1988, a figure above the African-American population and circulation percentages, is attributed to an increase in the social commentary category.

A closer look at the subject categories in Table IV and graphically presented in Figures II-VIII reveals the reasons behind the fluctuations between the three magazines.

Everyday life pictures, images that show African-Americans performing the same activities as whites, remained about the same for the years studied in all three magazines as shown in Figure II. As expected, Life's everyday life percentage was slightly higher overall than the other two, yet the category has decreased steadily from a 1978 peak.

Prominent person pictures, photographs of well-known African-Americans that do not refer to their race, remained consistently low for all three magazines until 1983. Life moved from a .2 percent low in 1983 to a 30.4 percent high in 1988 as shown in Figure III.

Advertisement pictures, as shown in Figure IV, were high in the early years, low in 1957, moderate in 1962-1972, gained in 1978, and have declined for all three magazines since 1978. The high percentages reported between 1942 and 1952 for Newsweek and Time are a result of several full page advertisements that show a butler serving alcohol on a silver tray. The advertising figures in subsequent years are a result of less stereotypical African-American portrayals.

Social commentary pictures, those images that included civil rights, social issues and political subjects, peaked in 1942 for Life because of the military coverage of African-Americans. All three magazines peaked in their

social commentary coverage in 1957 because of the civil rights movement, declined in 1962 despite continued civil rights activity, peaked again in 1967 because of the urban rioting, declined in 1972 and 1978, and have generally leveled off in coverage since 1983. However, Newsweek was particularly active in this category in 1988 compared with the other two as shown in Figure V.

Entertainment subjects, shown in Figure VI, have generally been about the same level of coverage for all three magazines for all the years studied. Life, however, has more often than not published more African-American entertainment pictures than the other two. The years 1967 and 1988 were the lowest for entertainment photographs for all three.

Photographs of African-Americans within the sports category have generally remained at about the same level of coverage for all three magazines as shown in Figure VII.

Finally, crime pictures have shown a similar pattern among the three magazines despite Life's peak in 1947 due to a series on prison life. Life's overall percentage in the years studied is slightly higher for African-American crime pictures than the other two magazines as shown in Figure VIII.

A qualitative look at the ways African-Americans were covered over the years reveals a stark change in their treatment. Particularly, early coverage of African-Americans would be labeled racist by today's standards.

In 1937, Newsweek ran two pictures of Liberty Square, a new housing project in Miami. The caption read, "Miami's more fortunate pickaninnies last week played in a model nursery. Their mothers cooked chitterlings in gleaming kitchens or lounged like white folks in a specious suburban clubroom."/23 Newsweek in the same year printed several pictures of people enjoying a

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23. Newsweek, March 20, 1937, p. 17.

country fair. One of the pictures shows an African-American with his head through a hole in a canvas sheet. A white man in a business suit and hat is shown about to hurl a ball at the grinning "target."/24

African-Americans appeared in many advertisements in the 1930s and 1940s as porters and train crew workers. The railroads were locked into highly competitive situations at the time. The quality of service seemed to be the biggest selling point. In the 1950s, rail passenger travel was replaced by more profitable freight service. The number of African-Americans in the train ads decreased while ads began to appear for airlines with white stewardesses. Beginning in the 1960s and continuing through the 1980s, African-Americans in advertisements were portrayed in career positions equal to whites and unrelated to their past social stereotypes.

In 1967, Newsweek and Time ran cover stories on Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., sports heroes, entertainment figures, the "Negro in Vietnam," the urban riots of that summer, and the underlying causes of African-American unrest. Yet in 1972, Newsweek and Time combined ran only 4.6 covers having to do with African-American sports and entertainment figures. Likewise in 1978, Newsweek and Time only had 3.4 cover pages devoted to African-Americans while Life had only .1 cover pages for that year.

Newsweek and Time magazines in 1988 ran cover stories on sports, entertainment and political notables. Newsweek's sharp increase in the African-American percentage was caused by its coverage on the social commentary aspect of African-American advancement and African-Americans as prominent American citizens.

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24. Newsweek, October 18, 1937, p. 23.

Life ran a special issue on the 20th anniversary of the civil rights movement in 1988. That one issue contained so many photographs of African-Americans in all subject categories that it propelled the overall percentage for the year from 6.7 to 13.1. The special edition issue was left out of the analysis because it would have presented a misleading picture of Life's African-American coverage. For example, the next issue after the special edition as found bound in the library, did not contain any pictures of African-Americans.

This study has been able to address the hypotheses posed in the first section.

1. African-American coverage increased over time. Hypothesis Supported.

Over the years studied, the African-American percentage has increased from an average low for all three magazines of 1.1 percent in 1942 to an average high of 8.8 percent in 1988.

2. The content categories of everyday life, prominent persons, social commentary, and advertisements will increase over time. Mixed Results.

3. The content categories of entertainment, sports and crime will decrease over time. Mixed Results.

During periods of social unrest or political awareness of African-Americans (the years 1957, 1967, 1972 and 1988), the social commentary, crime and prominent person (in 1988) subject categories and the number of cover photographs have increased. During those same years, however, everyday life and advertisement pictures have decreased. Entertainment and sports subjects have generally remained about the same.

4. The African-American pictorial coverage will be similar for all three magazines. Hypothesis Supported.

When analyzing the 11 years studied in each category for each magazine, there is remarkable similarity in the percentages obtained for all three

magazines. Despite individual differences during particular years, the differences between the three magazines remain slight over the 1937-1988 long-term time frame. Sentman criticized Life for its low African-American picture use. This study has shown that Life's totals were not unusual when compared to the other two magazines.

5. The African-American picture percentage will approach the 11 percent circulation and population figure for each magazine over time. Mixed Results.

When the percentage is computed from the number of human figure pages, the African-American percentage is much higher, and probably more accurate, than reported in previous studies. Although there has been a steady rise in African-American coverage for all three magazines, Newsweek is the only magazine that approached the 11 percent figure in 1972 and surpassed the number in 1988.

DISCUSSION

After reviewing the results of this study with an eye on the historical events within the 51 year time-frame, three eras emerge. The years 1937 to 1952 reflected the early racial stereotyping common to all publications. However, increased awareness of African-American problems during World War II was also within this period. The turbulent years between 1957 and 1972 showed the rise in the civil rights movement and the urban riots throughout the U.S. The era was also marked by an increased awareness among the media to report the underlying causes for African-American unrest. The modern era, the years 1978 to 1988, reflected the attempt by African-American leaders to affect change by working within various political systems.

Table V shows the combined percentages for all three magazines during the three eras for each subject category.

The stereotypical era of 1937-1952 showed African-Americans in everyday life and advertisement categories, but with overtly racist characterizations by today's standards. There were few prominent person pictures. The social commentary category was moderate because of coverage of African-Americans during World War II. There were practically no African-Americans on the covers.

The turbulent era of 1957-1972 showed a dramatic increase from the 1937-1952 percentage for the social commentary category because of the protests and the stories about them. The number of covers also increased sharply. But as demonstrated by the figures, a price was paid for such coverage. Everyday life and advertisement pictures declined to their lowest overall percentages. Advertisers probably did not want to use African-American models to sell their products at a time when there was so much negative publicity.

The modern era, 1978 to 1988, showed a sharp decrease in the social commentary category, but with sharp increases in everyday life, prominent person and advertisement picture categories.

Except for a slight rise during the modern era in crime pictures, the other two categories, entertainment and sports, remained at about the same percentage for all three magazines for all the years studied.

In a 1968 Time article on African-American participation in commercials, Urban League Director Whitney Young said, "It's important that blacks are used more frequently in ads because they serve to educate the masses of viewers that black people, like themselves, have an important role in American life. The situation was awful, is better, and has to get better."/25

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25. Commercials Crossing the Color Line. (1968, October 25). Time, p. 83.

This study has shown that at least within the pages of Life, Newsweek and Time, African-American picture coverage has improved. From a low of 1.6 in 1937-1952, the total African-American percentage moved to a high of 6.0 in 1978-1988. However, the number of African-American pictures should be higher. The overall African-American percentage for a magazine or newspaper should consistently be at least at the 11 percent population mark.

The increase in African-American coverage is due largely because of dramatic increases in everyday life, prominent person and advertisement subject categories. An emphasis on those subjects is an indication that African-Americans received recent attention not because of protests, entertainment or sports figures, but because of a sensitivity on the part of editors to show African-Americans as equal members of society. Such a trend reflects the way the American media have evolved from the stereotypical coverage of 50 years ago. Publishers, editors, reporters and photographers should be encouraged to continue that positive trend.

TABLE I

Total, Human Figure and African-American Pages
With African-American Total Percentages in Life, 1937-1988

Year	Total Pages	Human Figure Pages	African-American Pages	African-American Total Percentages
1937	4,968	1,932.7	29.8	1.5
1942	5,914	1,904.9	23.7	1.2
1947	7,072	2,185.7	21.2	1.0
1952	7,746	1,390.1	31.0	2.2
1957	7,578	3,172.0	83.4	2.6
1962	5,844	2,132.0	52.6	2.5
1967	5,466	1,662.6	92.9	5.6
1972	4,136	1,800.9	111.7	6.2
1978	2,034	1,023.0	32.5	3.2
1983	1,606	828.0	46.6	5.6
1988	1,624	728.4	48.7	6.7

TABLE II

Total, Human Figure and African-American Pages
With African-American Total Percentages in Newsweek, 1937-1988

Year	Total Pages	Human Figure Pages	African-American Pages	African-American Total Percentages
1937	2,178	530.4	3.2	.6
1942	3,922	582.4	2.7	.5
1947	5,188	457.6	13.3	3.0
1952	5,230	650.0	13.2	2.0
1957	5,320	540.8	5.7	1.1
1962	4,950	707.2	6.0	.9
1967	5,292	577.2	39.0	6.8
1972	5,346	582.4	37.7	6.5
1978	5,308	1,050.4	33.5	3.2
1983	4,916	889.2	46.3	5.2
1988	4,062	738.4	96.0	13.0

TABLE III

Total, Human Figure and African-American Pages
With African-American Total Percentages in Time, 1937-1988

Year	Total Pages	Human Figure Pages	African-American Pages	African-American Total Percentages
1937	4,008	348.4	6.9	2.0
1942	4,892	546.0	10.0	1.8
1947	5,786	613.6	15.0	2.4
1952	5,666	587.6	6.1	1.0
1957	5,648	800.8	9.0	1.1
1962	4,656	639.6	8.4	1.3
1967	5,258	894.4	31.2	3.5
1972	4,718	868.4	27.8	3.2
1978	5,072	941.2	48.1	5.1
1983	4,698	962.0	49.4	5.1
1988	4,700	977.6	64.7	6.6

TABLE IV

Number of African-American Covers and Coverage by Content Categories as Percent of Total African-American Coverage in Life, Newsweek and Time

	Covers			Everyday Life			Prominent Person			Advertisements		
	L*	N	T	L	N	T	L	N	T	L	N	T
1937	3.8	0.7	0	30.5	9.4	0	4.6	3.1	5.8	**	0	33.3
1942	0	0	0	0.6	7.5	0.5	0	0	0	**	64.2	33.0
1947	0	.5	.5	17.9	6.0	4.7	0	0	4.7	**	64.7	59.3
1952	0	1.0	0	0	6.8	0	0	1.5	5.8	**	57.6	43.0
1957	1.9	0	2.0	0	3.5	2.2	0	5.3	14.4	**	14.0	5.6
1962	1.9	0	0	0	0	19.0	0	5.0	6.0	**	20.0	6.0
1967	1.9	8.0	7.0	1.4	0.5	0.3	0	1.6	0.3	**	9.4	18.8
1972	6.0	2.0	2.6	0	9.0	12.2	0.4	7.7	3.2	**	30.5	46.8
1978	0.1	1.3	2.1	17.6	1.5	7.1	1.5	0.6	4.2	21.8	21.8	44.7
1983	0.1	2.8	1.1	14.8	8.9	12.3	0.2	19.9	9.5	14.6	25.3	41.9
1988	1.3	4.7	5.6	4.0	7.2	11.6	30.4	14.3	15.0	7.9	23.5	24.9
	Social Commentary			Entertainment			Sports			Crime		
	L	N	T	L	N	T	L	N	T	L	N	T
1937	10.8	31.3	31.9	20.4	31.3	7.3	9.3	15.6	4.3	8.7	0	17.4
1942	83.9	0	29.9	11.6	15.1	14.4	0	13.2	11.9	0	0	0
1947	11.2	9.0	2.7	8.9	4.5	12.0	4.5	14.3	13.3	29.2	1.5	3.3
1952	29.6	8.3	8.2	30.4	9.1	14.9	22.6	11.4	18.2	0	5.3	0
1957	64.4	33.3	30.0	8.0	21.1	16.7	23.2	19.3	27.8	0	3.5	3.3
1962	43.0	33.3	27.4	25.4	5.0	17.9	20.2	31.7	22.6	11.3	1.7	1.2
1967	55.2	49.0	38.5	8.4	8.7	5.1	24.8	11.5	8.3	6.3	13.8	16.0
1972	29.1	23.9	14.7	27.7	8.5	11.9	21.1	15.4	9.4	17.1	5.0	1.8
1978	0	18.8	11.0	15.5	17.6	7.3	19.4	22.7	17.3	23.9	17.0	8.5
1983	25.2	13.0	12.8	27.0	13.2	8.7	15.7	16.8	13.8	2.4	3.0	3.0
1988	9.8	26.1	9.6	4.0	9.3	11.0	25.8	11.5	21.3	18.3	8.1	6.6

* L = Life, N = Newsweek, T = Time. Life figures (1937-1972) are from Sentman's study. ** Advertising figures for Life, 1937-1972 were not reported by Sentman. Percentages may be more or less than 100 due to rounding.

TABLE V

Combined Percentages for Life, Newsweek and Time
for Three Time Periods

	1937-1952	1957-1972	1978-1988
Everyday	7.0	4.0	9.4
Prominent Person	2.1	3.7	10.6
Advertisements*	44.4	18.9	25.2
Social Commentary	21.4	36.8	14.0
Entertainment	15.0	13.7	12.6
Sports	11.6	19.6	18.3
Crime	5.5	6.8	10.1
Covers	.5	2.6	2.1
Total	1.6	3.4	6.0

*From 1937-1972, only Newsweek and Time are represented in this category.

FIGURE 1

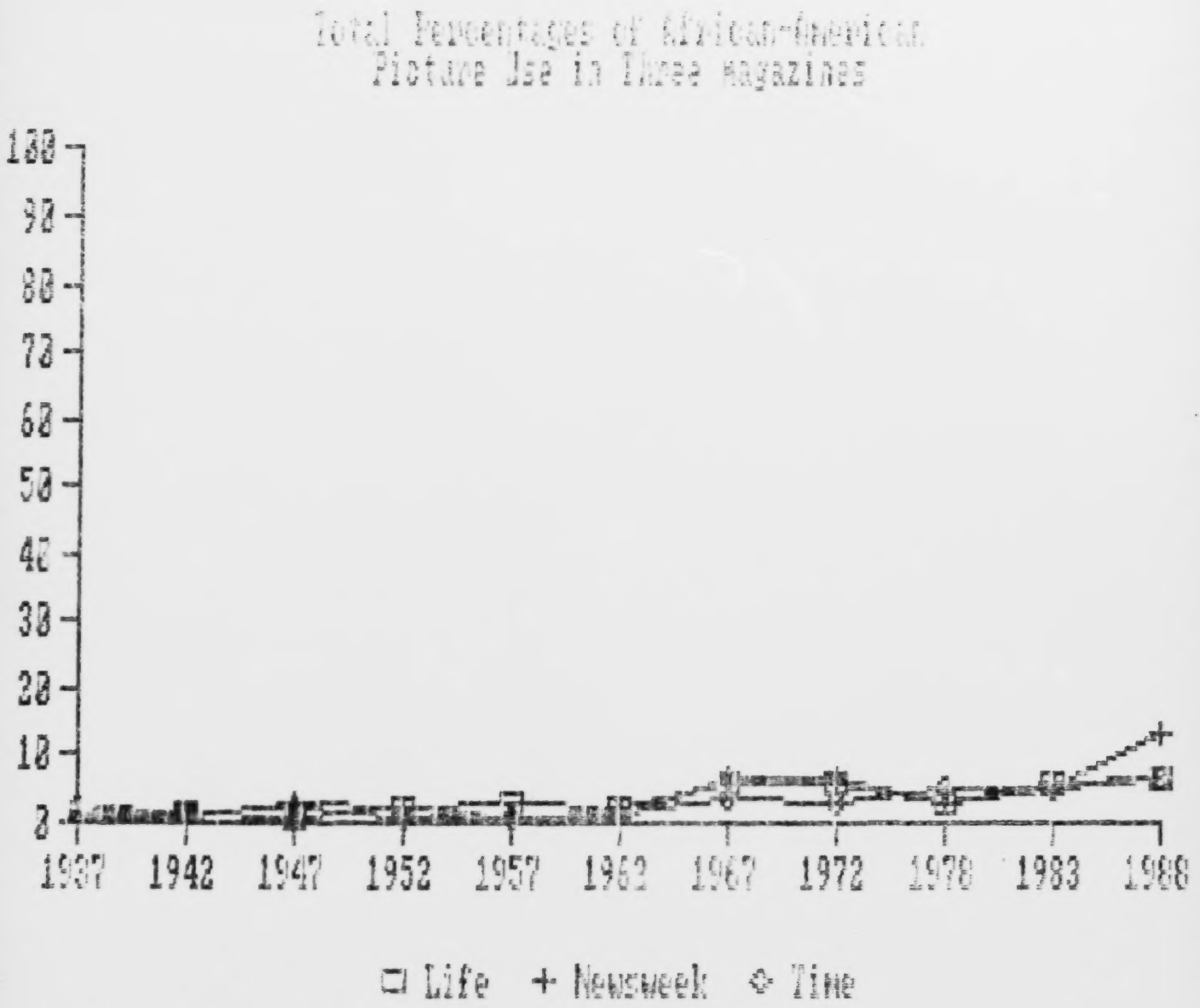
Total Percentages of African-American
Picture Use in Three Magazines
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1937
1942
1947
1952
1957
1962
1967
1972
1978
1983
1988
Life
Newsweek
Time

FIGURE II

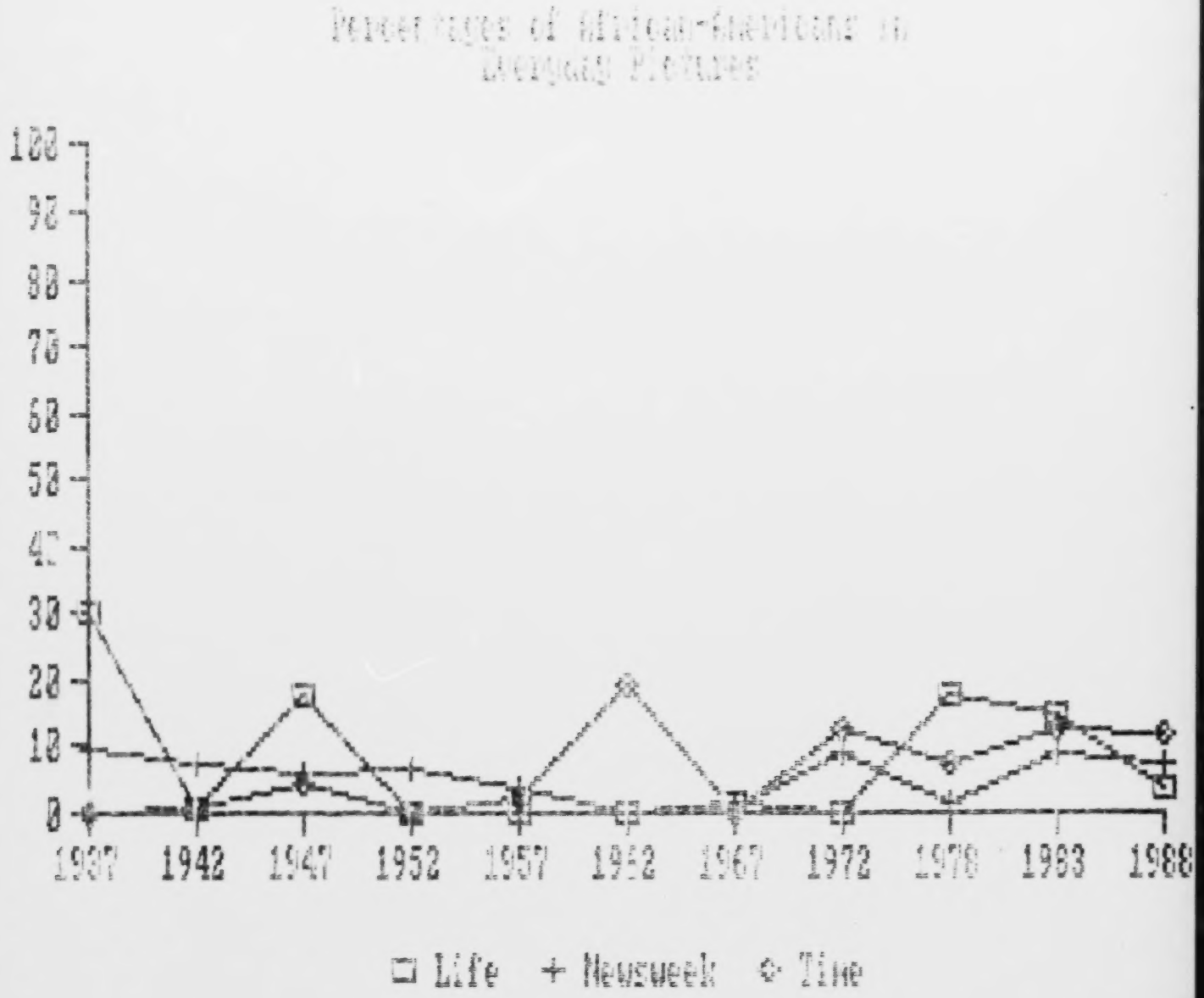
Percentages of African-Americans in
Images Photos
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1937
1942
1947
1952
1957
1962
1967
1972
1978
1983
1988
Life
Newsweek
Time

FIGURE III

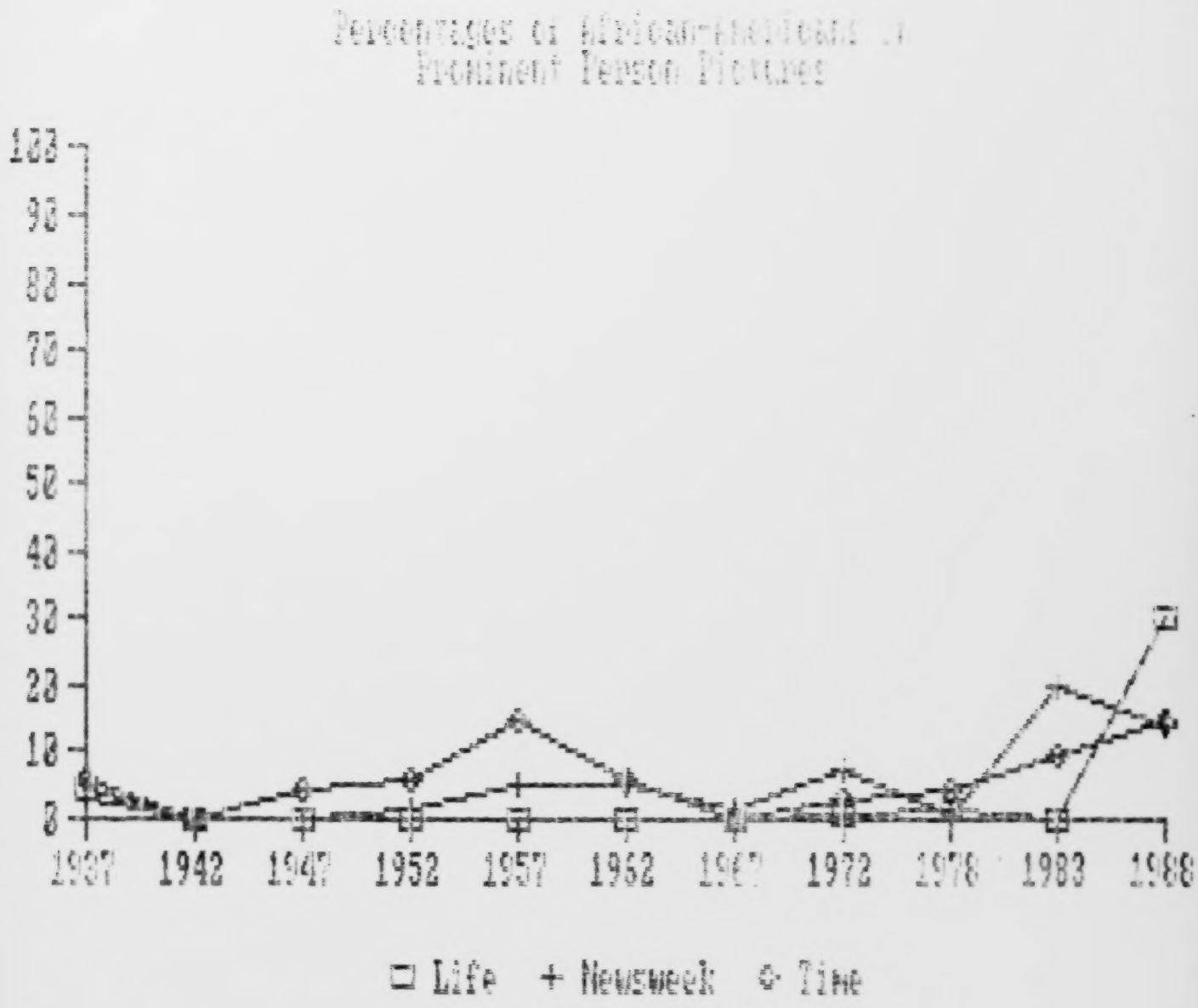
Percentages of African-Americans in
Prominent Jewish Pictures
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1937
1942
1947
1952
1957
1962
1967
1972
1978
1983
1988
Life
Newsweek
Time

FIGURE IV

Percentages of African-Americans in Advertisement Pictures

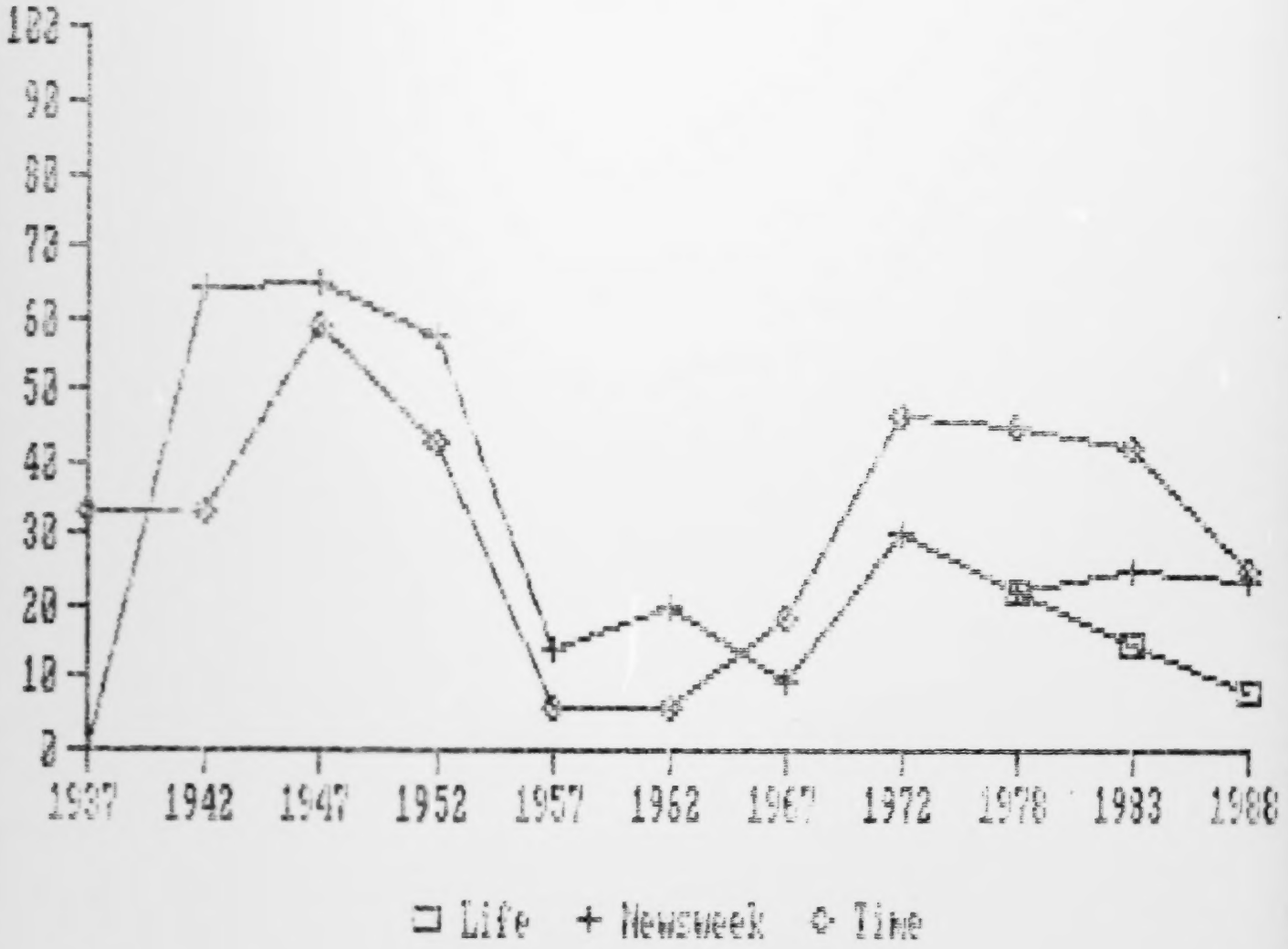

FIGURE V

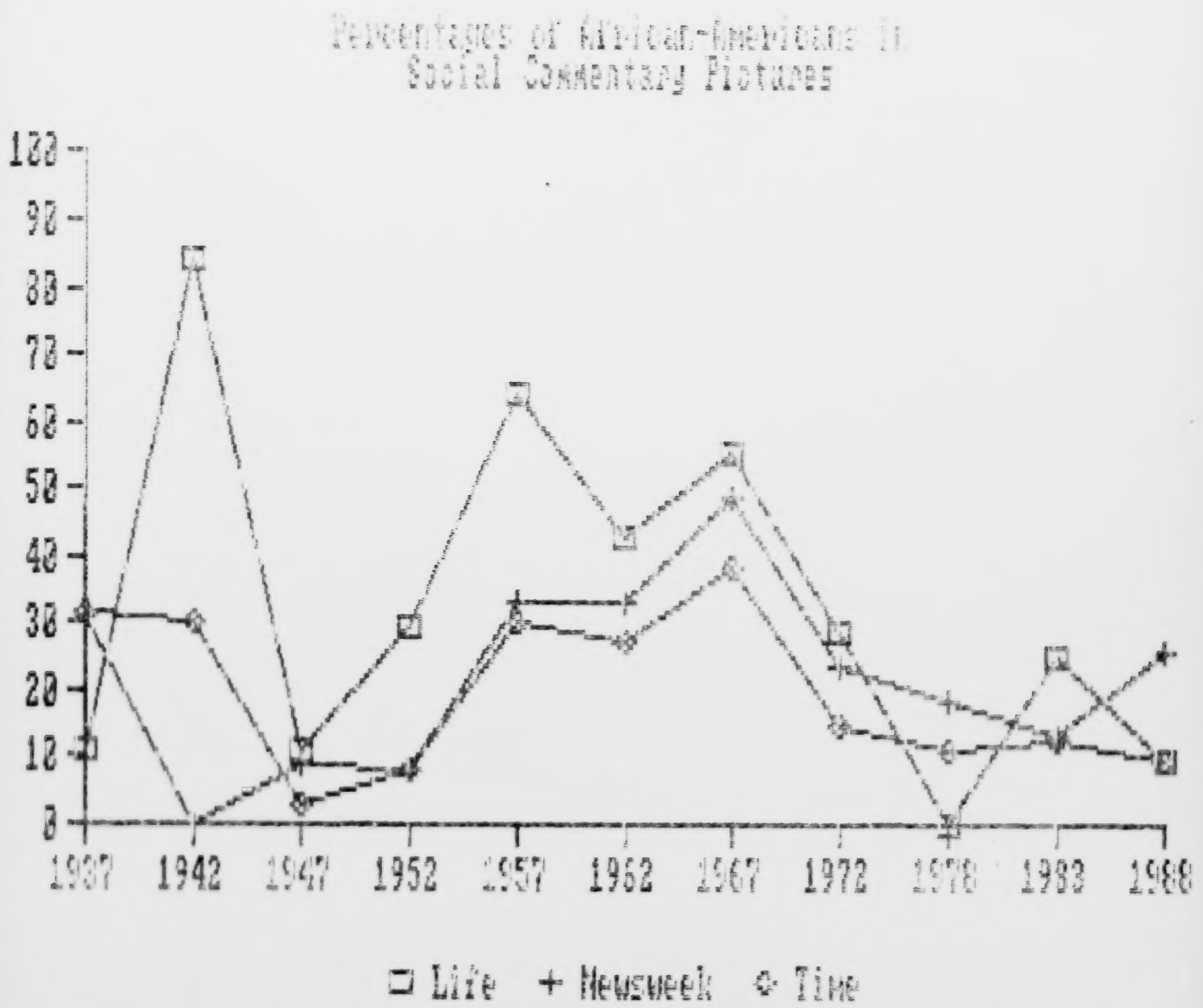
Percentages of African-Americans in
Social Commentary Pictures
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1937
1942
1947
1952
1957
1962
1967
1972
1978
1983
1988
Life
Newsweek
Time

FIGURE VI

Percentages of Negro-Americans in
Entertainment Pictures

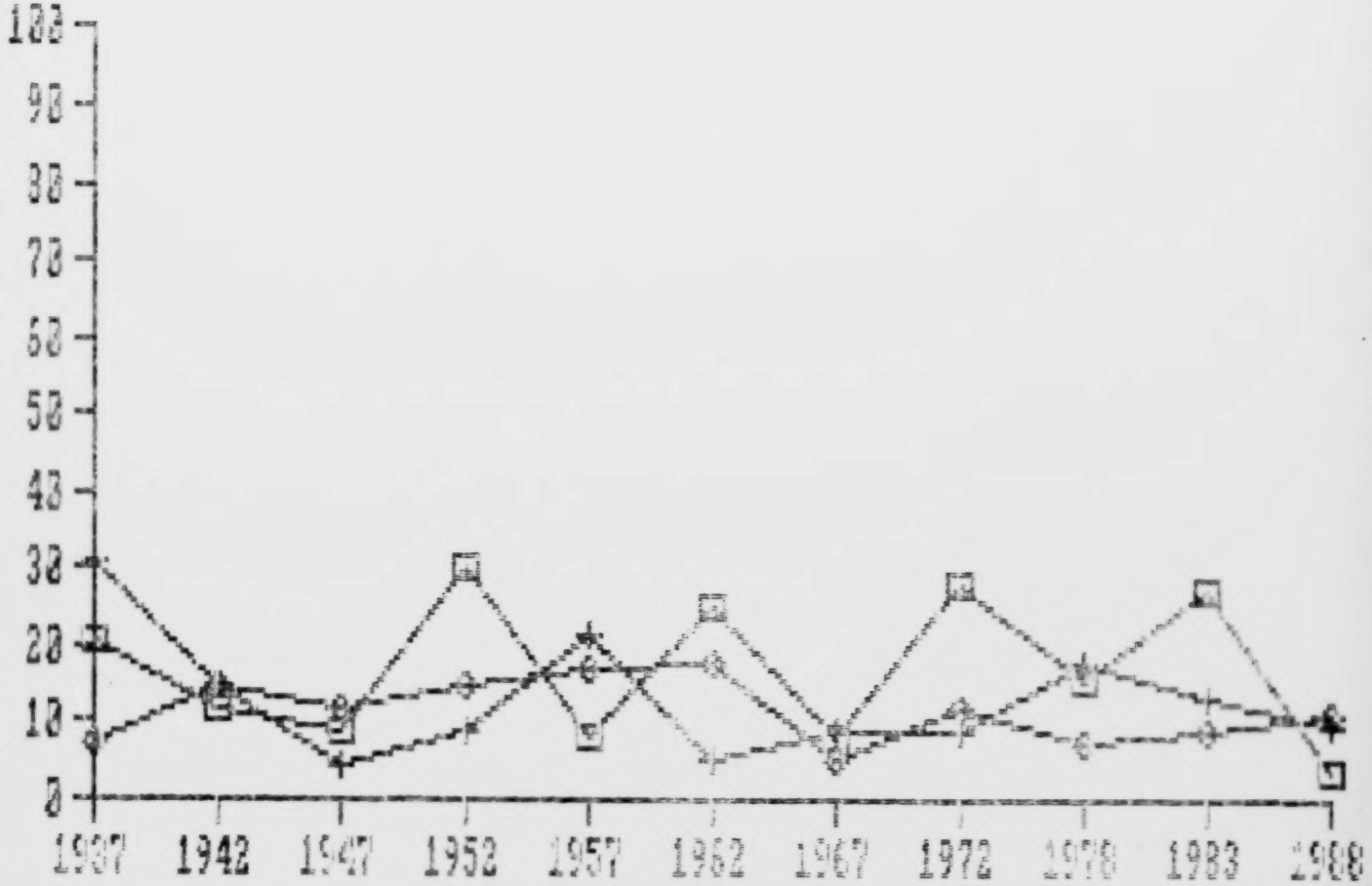

FIGURE VII

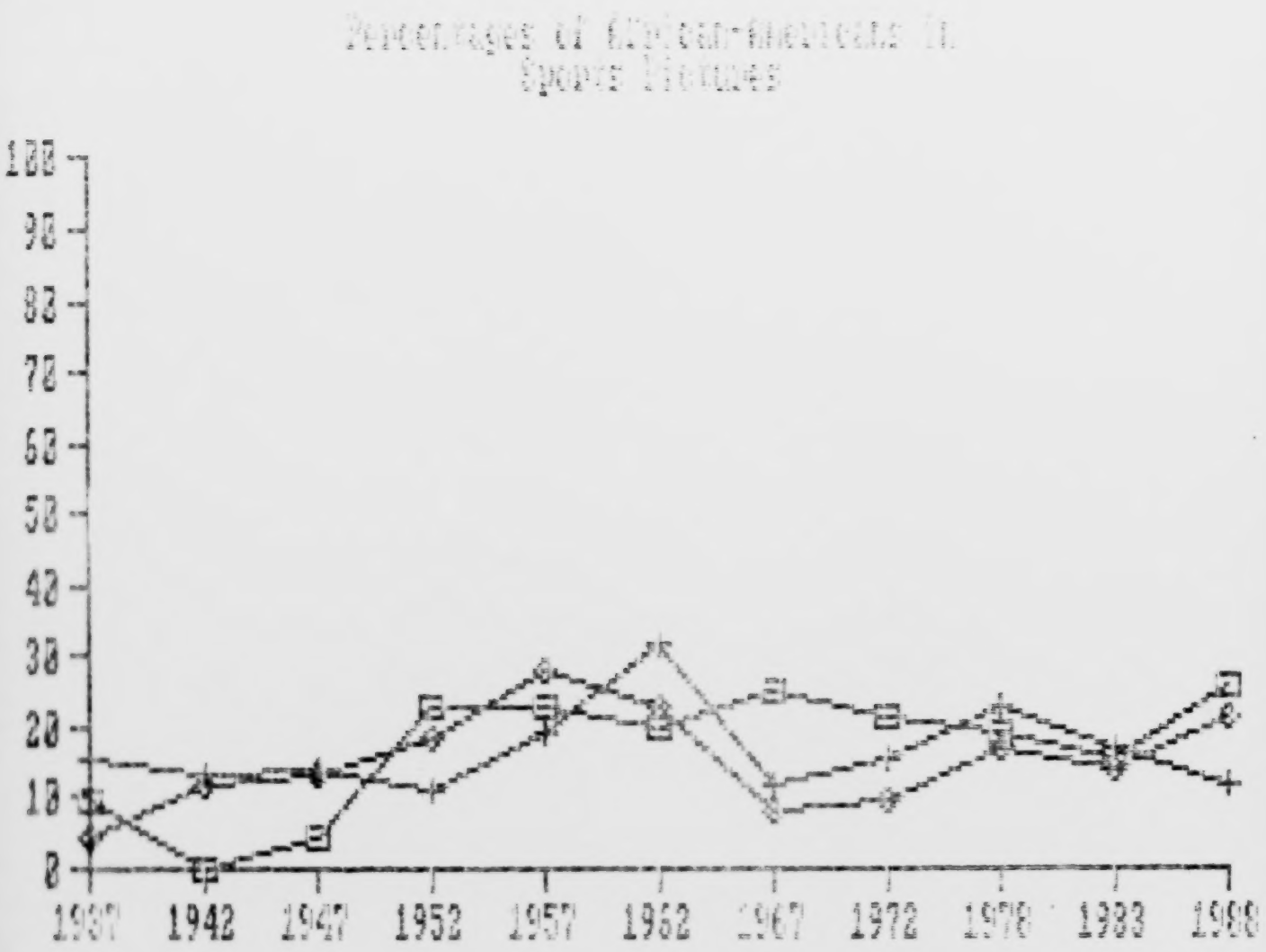
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1937
1942
1947
1952
1957
1962
1967
1972
1978
1983
1988
Life
Newsweek
Time

FIGURE VIII

Percentages of African-Americans in Crime Pictures